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THE Commonweal

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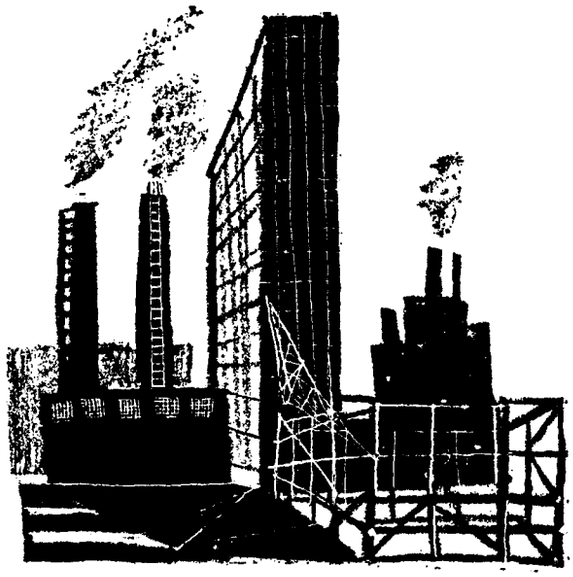
by James O'Gara



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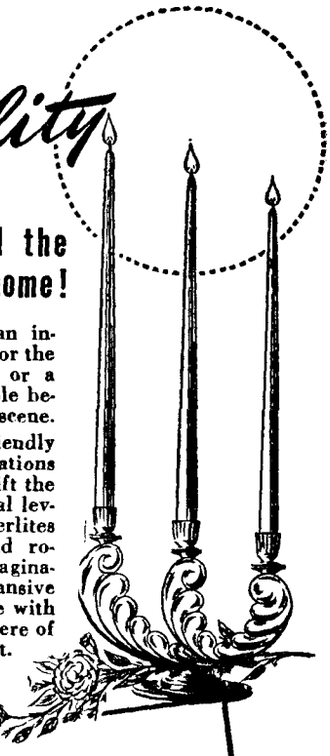

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THE
Commonweal
week by week

THE SHIFT IN EMPHASIS

SECRETARY of Defense Wilson apparently has a genius for off-the-cuff remarks which later return to plague him. The most famous of these, of course, was his often-quoted statement about the identity of interest between General Motors and the United States. Recently he caused almost as much excitement abroad by his offhand comment that current development of atomic and other new weapons would permit troop-cutbacks overseas, with a heavy saving for the taxpayer.

European diplomats, always haunted by the fear of a return to isolationism by the U.S., reacted quickly and unfavorably to the Wilson statement. To calm the situation, President Eisenhower himself had to state emphatically that the U.S. had no plans to cut back its combat forces overseas, adding that in some cases these troops are actually being reinforced rather than reduced in strength.

For the time being the President's prompt action may serve to quiet European fears that U.S. determination to prevent Russian aggression is weakening. But still casting a shadow over the whole situation is the widespread discussion of a possible shift in emphasis by the U.S., away from conventional weapons and techniques in favor of concentration on atomic weapons.

To us, one of the most disturbing things about the hints and trial balloons issuing from Washington on this subject is the conviction that the new Administration is still tailoring defense to a pre-election economy pledge, rather than to any objective look at the world situation. Obviously there is a point beyond which our military expenses cannot go without imperiling our entire economic system. Equally obvious, it seems to us, is the fact that most of those who favor cutting back on defense spending have not seriously tried to determine what these limits are. Clearly, this is not an area where debate can be settled by hurling economic generalities at one's opponents.

To make up for an obvious lack in this debate, the National Planning Association recently carried out a thorough study of the problem. A non-political organization devoted to public understanding of the issues of the day, the NPA made no attempt to evaluate in military terms the dimensions of the threat posed by Soviet aggressiveness. What its report did say is that the United States can afford additional programs for national defense, far beyond what is now being spent, without undermining our economy or passing the danger mark on the tax rate. The businessmen and economists who carried on the study were concerned with no more than this; they leave the decision on the necessity for such spending to those responsible for national security.

SINCE most of the arguments in favor of switching almost exclusively to atomic weapons and away from conventional methods have been based on economic reasons, this report is of great importance. It indicates that the nation is not confronted with an either/or choice, with atomic weapons on one side and conventional methods of warfare on the other, and with no possibility of having both. In view of this fact, much more thought should be devoted to the question before any decision is made to concentrate almost exclusively on atomic weapons.

From a military point of view, the wisdom of such concentration is at least questionable. This nation is committed to a policy of limiting as far as possible the conflicts that develop, with the idea of preventing a worldwide third war. For local emergencies like Korea, Trieste, Indochina and the like, it is hard to see how atomic weapons can take the place of troops on the spot with tanks and rifles. An incident that has grown big enough for the atom bomb is already too big for safety.

Even more important than such problems—real as they are—is the entire question of using atomic weapons at all. A war with conventional weapons is horrible enough. Atomic warfare would be indescribably more so. Since effective international control of the atomic bomb has not been possible, this nation has to continue its efforts in this field, and there is little doubt that our ability to deliver

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severe retaliation is itself a strong deterrent to Soviet attack on this country. But our goal should always be the outlawing of atomic bombs by all nations, backed by workable methods of enforcement.

The United States can hardly press for a ban on the use of atom bombs if we ourselves build our whole military system around such weapons. Nor can we expect Europeans to enjoy the notion that we coolly accept the idea of fighting an atomic war with Russia in Western Europe.

On this whole question of economy and defense, we think the Administration seriously underestimates the American people. We are convinced that they will support President Eisenhower in any plan he feels necessary for national defense, tax-cut or no. Certainly the U.S. should not risk atomic warfare for the sake of a welcome, but still not essential, reduction in the national budget.

"LAND WITHOUT PEOPLE"

A STRIKING Social Justice Statement is now issued each year by the Hierarchy of Australia. Their current message (the full text can be found in the November *Catholic Mind*) deals with the duty of their people to welcome large numbers of immigrants.

The Bishops quote Pius XII on the individual's natural right to emigrate and then examine the needs of such populous lands as Germany, Holland and Italy. They cite a non-Catholic fellow-countryman, Sir Frederick Eggleton, to the effect that "No country is entitled to hold a vast territory and vast resources simply to protect its cultural heritage." In their own words, "It is difficult to discover any moral or ethical principle which justifies Australians in demanding a vast continent so that they may enjoy a high degree of material satisfaction while the citizens of overpopulated lands go hungry for lack of opportunity." Do not such words also have application for the United States?

NEXT WEEK

JEAN HOLZHAUER writes about Cyril Connolly and the American dream.

The American dream "seems too real, after all, to be merely idea, too persistent not to have an existence of its own. It is most often expressed in political or economic or social terms: 'A Chicken in Every Pot'; 'The March of Science'; 'Gracious Living'; between the idea and the reality falls not only the shadow but the concrete blockbuster of goals wholly material, concerns wholly pragmatic. Where are the new art and philosophy? Where the new expression 'to bear the same relation to the life beneath which art and philosophy among us ought to have had?' Disembodied, surely; but constantly tantalizing, constantly almost evoked by, among other things, those very voices which deny their possibility."

ANOTHER ELECTION DAY

THE vitality of our political institutions is little manifest in our off-year elections. Except that Election Day is a holiday in many states, few citizens have much to say for it. The hope that the balloting might show the direction of national sentiment is a slight one. For local contests for office are too often decided on the basis of personalities and local issues.

Even political big-wigs experience difficulty in getting worked up about the results. At a rally on the Eastern Seaboard the other day one of the Republican party's top leaders told his loyal hearers to be sure to vote this year so that there would be no repetition of what had just happened in Minnesota. No one seemed the least concerned that in his hazy vision of the remote Midwest the man didn't have the state right—for it was Wisconsin that elected a Democratic Representative (after a colorless campaign) in a district which had been Republican for years. President Eisenhower's unwillingness to intervene in state or local contests added to the lack of interest this November.

The digging up of political scandals seemed to be the most prominent feature of campaigns in the New York area. There was plenty to undermine confidence in both executive and judiciary. The standard-bearers of both Democrats and Republicans in the State of New Jersey—the candidates for Governor—were successfully accused of such unsavory connections that many conscientious voters felt unable to vote for either one. The list of candidates for Mayor of New York City, widely held to be the nation's second biggest elective office, was likewise anything but impressive.

There is another disquieting feature of our off-year elections: the wretched turnout. Even when electing a President, seldom more than half of the eligible voters go to the polls. In off years the number voting in the United States falls way below that figure.

Such lethargy and indifference may reflect a feeling of security and confidence on the part of the non-voting majority. But that gives the political

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machine its chance; it is comparatively simple for unscrupulous private interests to secure influence and favors at public expense. And by the time the major parties are confronting the voter with the rival candidates, between whom there is little to choose, it is too late. Refusal to vote for either one is no help whatever to the cause of good government. Protest votes for minor party candidates seldom attain proportions that would make them effectual even as a warning.

The only hope is that one day dissatisfaction with venal and inferior candidates for high posts in this country will arouse a sense of duty among certain high-minded citizens with qualifications for political office. The crying need for better officeholders might also focus more attention on the selection period that precedes the primaries. That is where the real spadework needs to be done. Without such changes off-year elections will do little else than serve as unpleasant reminders here and abroad of the lamentable gulf between much incumbent local, state and federal government and the American democratic ideal.

TRIESTE

THE recent British-American statement on withdrawal from Trieste caused a loud bang in Yugoslavia and Italy, with the moving of troops and the mobilizing of reserves; it also caused some heavy breathing in Western capitals over the possibility of war on the Adriatic.

But the most recent developments make it appear that there will be no war, and that the *status quo ante* may be recovered. France, which in 1948 joined Britain and the United States in promising Trieste to Italy but was not a party to this fall's statement, is now in a conveniently neutral position. M. Bidault, the Foreign Minister, has been counseling both the Yugoslavs and the Italians.

The British and Americans are not going to withdraw their troops for quite a while yet. A realistic settlement in Trieste is at least possible.

French leaders hope to convince both Italians and Yugoslavs to withdraw their troops and start talking. Tito has privately been much more reasonable than he has been publicly. In time, this schizophrenia may grow less pronounced. And then a division of Trieste along approximate ethnic boundaries, near the present zonal borders, may be possible. That, at least, is the French hope.

But whatever the solution, the effect in Italy will be unsatisfactory. The Allies once again have promised more than they could deliver. Pro-Allied sympathies will have been weakened.

INDEPENDENCE IN SAIGON

IF you wait too long to pull chestnuts out of the fire, you are likely to find that the chestnuts are no more. That is France's situation today in Indochina.

The French waited a long time before they began to talk seriously with the Indochinese people about genuine independence. After an abortive attempt to reestablish the colonial system in the three Associated States of Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam, the French temporized with the non-Communist native forces while they fought the Communist-led but professedly nationalist Viet Minh.

Last spring, under great pressure from the United States and the Indochinese native leaders (especially the King of Cambodia), threatened with the loss of all of Indochina to the Viet Minh, the French agreed to meet the inevitable. They promised Indochina real independence within the French Union. The question is whether they were too late.

Two hundred Vietnamese nationalists gathered in Saigon in October to work out the preliminary terms of the independence agreement. Supposedly they had been judiciously picked by Bao Dai, Chief of State of Viet Nam. Trouble was not expected. But they voted to have Viet Nam independent *outside* the French Union.

Bao Dai had just arrived in Paris from the Riviera when the news came through. His associates in Saigon frantically worked with the delegates to this National Congress, finally obtaining a statement which said that "an independent Viet Nam could not adhere to the French Union in its present form." But the Congress was not otherwise conciliatory. It demanded power to direct the negotiations with the French, and it refused to dissolve itself, comparing its stand with that of France's "tennis court" Assembly of 1789.

The rebellion of the National Congress was another price of France's past obstinacy. The Indochinese leaders obviously still distrust French promises. That France is apparently sincere in its present attempts to negotiate independence for Viet Nam, having already granted it to Laos, is the tragedy of the situation. And the fact is that the Communists will take over completely if France should actually get out.

France has a strong, realistic plan for saving Indochina: granting independence within the Union, strengthening both native and French forces, and the launching of a new military offensive. This is a plan which could gain a favorable settlement in that rich and strategic country. It would be bitter indeed if memory of the past jeopardizes the future for Indochina.

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Catholics and Isolationism

"DESPITE PAPAL STATEMENTS, IMPORTANT SEGMENTS OF CATHOLIC OPINION ECHO THE WORST TAGS OF THE ISOLATIONIST-NATIONALISTIC PRESS."

JAMES O'GARA

A POUND and a half of lard, two pounds of flour, four small cans of condensed milk, and a two-pound bag of dried beans or peas—these are the items that went into the Eisenhower food parcel. To get their hands on one, in the summer of 1953, East Germans streamed across the border into the West by the thousands, thumbing their noses at their Communist masters, daring the Russian tanks to intervene, risking prison and even death.

While this mass disobedience was embarrassing East German officials, U.S. leaders were facing a different kind of problem. All over the nation, farm surpluses piled higher and higher. Wheat spilled over its bins, the barns were filled to the bursting point. From three to five billion dollars worth of farm surplus was already on hand, and the fall harvest was not yet in. For U.S. government officials, the problem involves more than the embarrassment of being almost shamefully rich in a world of poverty; on a purely physical plane, there is simply not enough storage space to accommodate the surplus riches of the U.S. agricultural system.

The chasm between East German want and U.S. wealth is typical of the modern era. The same stark contrast of poverty on one hand and plenty on the other exists between the U.S. and India, Italy, China and a large part of the rest of the world. Back of the U.S. surplus stands the vast productive power of this nation, the natural resources, the technological development, what is called the know-how, for the ability to produce farm surpluses is essentially the same as that which spews out automobiles and trucks, tanks and planes, devices and gadgets of all sorts in an ever-expanding stream. What all this wealth and productive potential adds up to is national power, on a scale never dreamed of by the Founding Fathers.

Young as nations go, the United States now exercises power on a scale so vast that an important decision in Washington affects the lives of individuals living thousands of miles away, in Pakistan and Korea, in Paris and Berlin, in the Moscow of Malenkov and Molotov as well as the Moscow located in Idaho. Whether the average U.S. citizen is ready to recognize it or not, and whether he likes it or not, American power is a fact, one of the most important facts in the modern world. Because of this power, the future of the world for many years to come to a large extent hinges on the answer to this question: In foreign affairs, will the United States match its awesome power with a corresponding sense of responsibility? If the U.S. uses its power justly and intelligently, peace is possible. If the U.S. abdicates its responsibility, peace in our time is an impossibility.

AS far as American Catholics are concerned, one would expect the weight of opinion to be on the side of an intelligent recognition of U.S. power in world affairs and a responsible exercise of that power. In matters of foreign policy, one would expect American Catholics to have before their eyes the goal of an international order in conformity with the Christian principles of justice and charity. Inclining Catholics in this direction is the universality of the Church, which knows neither race nor nationality but is intended for all men, in every age or in every land, and which sees all men as brothers under the Fatherhood of God. In the Mystical Body all are joined with Christ; Englishmen, Frenchmen, Americans, Russians, Germans, Chinese, Japanese, white, black, yellow or red—all are made one.

By definition, by what they profess, whatever their individual day-to-day failings, Catholics subscribe to the law of love. It cannot be a matter of indifference that millions in other parts of the world regularly fail to get enough to eat, or that in countries like India and Egypt the average baby has less than an even chance of surviving until he is twenty-five. Although applying the parable of the Good Samaritan to the affairs of nations is not as simple as it is in the case of individuals, and the forms it takes will be different, it must still be applied.

The whole weight of Catholic social thought inclines toward solidarity, in families, in industrial relations, in the international order. It is opposed to division, *laissez faire,* anarchy. In making statements on international affairs, the modern popes have merely applied this idea to our times. It is therefore not surprising that

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they have spoken against a spirit of national isolationism and selfishness in world affairs. The teaching authority of the modern papacy has been strongly exercised on behalf of the organization of nations, the creation of an international juridical order, and collective action against unjust aggressors. At the same time the popes have emphasized the necessity of achieving social justice if real peace is to be created, and they have stressed such points as the need to permit have-not nations access to raw materials and markets and to allow citizens of overpopulated countries entry into less crowded areas of the world. Quotations to document the internationalist position of the modern papacy could be endless; a few typical ones will suffice.

IN 1928, Pope Pius XI wrote in his encyclical, *Mortalium Animos:*

> On this side and on that, longstanding discords and new differences provoke seditions and internal struggles, and many controversies which jeopardize the tranquillity and prosperity of peoples can never be solved save by the joint actions of heads of States or those who direct or administer the country's interests. And so it is very easy to understand the longings of a great many people to see, in the name of this universal brotherhood, the establishment of an even closer and closer union between the various nations, all the more because all acknowledge the unity of the human race.

In his Christmas Message for 1948, Pope Pius XII wrote:

> The Catholic doctrine on the State and civil society has always been based on the principle that, in keeping with the will of God, the nations form together a community with a common aim and common duties. Even when the proclamation of this principle and its practical consequences gave rise to violent reactions, the Church denied her assent to the erroneous concept of an absolutely autonomous sovereignty divested of all social obligations.

After World War I, Pope Benedict XV wrote in his encyclical, *Pacem Dei Munus:*

> . . . it is much to be desired, Venerable Brethren, that all States, putting aside mutual suspicion, should unite in one league, or rather a type of family of peoples, calculated both to maintain their own independence and safeguard the order of human society.

Speaking to the fourth annual Congress of the World Movement for Federal Government in April of 1951, Pope Pius XII said:

> Your movement, gentlemen, dedicates itself to realizing an effective political organization of the world. Nothing is more in conformity with the traditional doctrine of the Church. . . .

On the subject of aggression, Pope Pius XII wrote in his Christmas Message of 1948:

> A people threatened with an unjust aggression, or already its victim, may not remain passively indifferent if it would act and think as becomes Christians; all the more does the solidarity of the family of nations forbid others to behave as mere spectators in an attitude of apathetic neutrality. Who will ever measure the harm already caused in the past by such indifference to war of aggression which is quite alien to the Christian instinct? One thing however is certain: the commandment of peace is a matter of divine law. Its purpose is the protection of the goods of humanity, inasmuch as they are the gifts of the Creator. Among these goods some are of such importance to society that it is perfectly lawful to defend them against unjust aggression. *Their defense is even an obligation for the nations as a whole who have a duty not to abandon a nation that is attacked.* [Italics added.]

On the subject of the United Nations, Pope Pius XII wrote in his 1944 Christmas Message:

> This organization will be vested by common consent with supreme authority and with power to smother in its germinal stages any threat of isolated or collective aggression. No one can hail this development with greater joy than he who has long upheld the principle that the idea of war as an apt and appropriate means of solving international conflicts is now out of date. . . . If there is now the threat that other nations will intervene judicially and inflict chastisement on aggressors, then war will always be subject to the stigma of proscription, will be under surveillance, and will be open to prevention by force. Thus, mankind, emerging from the dark night in which it has been so long submerged, will be able to hail the dawn of a new and better era of history.

SO say the popes. But only non-Catholics will be surprised that many U.S. Catholics act as if they have never heard of such papal statements, or, if they have heard of them, still ignore them. American Catholics traditionally have a very high regard for the person of the pope, whoever he may be. European Catholics even have a somewhat cynical remark to the effect that when the pope sneezes, U.S. Catholics wipe their noses. But the pope pronouncing on the Assumption and the pope making a specific application of Catholic principle to the social order or the international scene are two different things. For many American Catholics there appear to be more intellectual, moral and emotional roadblocks in the way of accepting papal social thought than there are to prevent unquestioning assent to an infallible papal pronouncement on a matter of strict dogma.

Perhaps if one could take the long view, this lag between what the popes preach on international affairs and American Catholic practice would not seem a matter for too great concern. It took a long time for the papal social encyclicals like *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* even to begin to enter into popular currency, but that process is now well started, and in late years the social encyclicals have almost imperceptibly come to be respectable. If one could hope for as much in attitudes on international affairs, the situation would look brighter than it actually does. But here

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the future is not too promising, and time is short. Like millions of other Americans, many Catholics in the U.S. draw the line at the waterline. For them the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans represent the ultimate range of interest and concern. As far as they are concerned, the rest of the world can go its way. Sink or swim, it apparently makes little difference to them.

In 1953, this attitude represents more than moral abdication in international affairs. It represents national suicide. The most pressing argument for what is called internationalism, as opposed to isolationism, is national self-interest. The days when the U.S. could debate on the League of Nations and reject the idea of participation without feeling any immediate effect are gone. Wendell Willkie's "One World" phrase was more than rhetoric. Modern science has devoured distance and made neighbors of us all. The birth of the atom bomb marked the beginning of a new era; isolationism is now a sheer impossibility for a nation of any size or importance. One way or the other, the hydrogen bomb will make men brothers; we will unite in life, or we will die together. There is no other way.

Isolationism in this country will decline in influence only when educators and molders of public opinion have persuaded enough people that U.S. self-interest demands an intelligent participation in international affairs and prudent use of national power on behalf of international order and a world of peace. Here, then, there would seem to be all the ingredients for a happy marriage. On the one hand there is the national interest, and on the other Catholic pre-disposition toward creating a family of nations.

Yet, despite the many papal statements on the subject, important segments of Catholic opinion echo the worst tags of the isolationist-nationalistic press. Thus some diocesan papers and powerful columnists dutifully print current papal statements on the necessity for international organization, then editorially snipe at U.S. participation in the UN. Forced to the wall, such editors and columnists would agree that papal teaching is certainly on the side of an international world organization dedicated to keeping the peace. But not the UN, they will hasten to add, not the UN. The theory they will support, if pushed into a dialectical corner; the practice, the never-perfect reality, will not satisfy, today or ever.

FOR all the stress placed on logic by Catholic schools, the position of such Catholic isolationists would be less dangerous if it were not so illogical. A clear-cut withdrawal to our own shores by the U.S. would create a power vacuum into which the Soviet Union would move immediately. This would mean incalculable harm to the world, but even so this course would hardly be as dangerous to the national interest as the on-again, off-again position to which Catholic

isolationists seem to be particularly susceptible. Cursed with a potentially fatal ambivalence, they will one day parrot the outcries of every shrill nationalist, alienating our allies, urging withdrawal from foreign entanglements, a halt to the "slaughter" of "our boys," an end to "global boondoggling" and lower taxes; the next day they are just as likely to fall easy prey to the most impassioned, carry-the-war-to-the-Communist-enemy orators. For this group, General MacArthur was made to order, and the same people who thought we should pull out of Korea were simultaneously almost hysterical in their support of the man who would have enlarged the war by carrying it to China proper.

Here the problem with the Catholic isolationist is not that he ignores the necessity of "pure means." Rather it is that he seems completely uninterested in the means by which decisions can be implemented, paying no attention to the fact that grand-sounding decisions in foreign affairs are useless, and even worse than useless, if no means exist to carry them out. As a result of this sublime indifference to the practical execution of policy, the Catholic isolationist lives in a kind of Walter Mitty world which has very little resemblance to the actual distribution of power among nations.

In consistently ignoring the limits of the possible in this way, the Catholic isolationist resembles many of his non-religious cohorts. But the Catholic isolationist has a special characteristic, apparently due to a never-stated assumption that moral judgments by individuals carry with them the persuading force of armies. Not for him the mundane assembling of divisions, the counting of planes, the massing of tanks. Once moral judgment is pronounced, the problem is solved. Thus rhetorical denunciations of the Chinese Communist regime are plentiful; down-to-earth estimates of the fighting force necessary to invade the mainland of China are few and far between. Questioning U.S. ability to launch such an attack at this time or the prudence of the entire idea at any time is likely to produce only the charge of being "soft" toward Communism.

ODDLY enough, an important element in Catholic isolationism is distrust of foreigners. The child of an immigrant Church and himself frequently the son or daughter of immigrant parents, the Catholic isolationist is firmly, almost fanatically nationalistic. In its broad

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outlines, this distaste for foreigners may be a quality which Catholic isolationists share with other Americans who have the same outlook on foreign policy. But Catholic isolationists excel in antipathy to people snidely referred to as "planners."

As has been frequently noted, the roots of this fear go far back. In the last century, when Darwinism, scientism, anti-clericalism and modernism in general made the future of the Church look dark, Catholics withdrew so thoroughly from intellectual, social and artistic movements that leadership fell largely to a-religious or actually anti-religious men. As a result, too many good features of the modern world developed without the influence of Catholics or even despite the spirited opposition of Catholics.

In this century, the same fear makes many American Catholics automatically unsympathetic to organizations like UNESCO, which grew up under non-Catholic auspices, and positively antagonistic to enthusiasts for world government or to those who dedicate their lives to planning organized ways and means of attacking world poverty. Both the late Brien McMahon, who was a Catholic, and Walter Reuther, who is not, separately proposed using daringly large sums—which were still much smaller than the amount spent on national defense—for years to come in an effort to build up the poverty-stricken areas of the world and create a climate favorable to peace. It would be pleasant to be able to report that Catholic opinion made these suggestions its own, but outside of a limited circle it would be untrue. Among Catholic isolationists, such schemes arouse profound mistrust, and this fact leads to one of the greatest paradoxes of Catholic isolationism: Although feeding the hungry and clothing the naked are works of mercy, some Catholic commentators do not merely disagree with but refer sneeringly to what they call the "do-gooders" and "bleeding-hearts" active in Point Four or international organizations like UNESCO.

PART of the emotional underpinning of Catholic isolationism undoubtedly comes from the long-standing love affair between the American Catholic press and the simple solution. Until comparatively recent times, few statements could flout reality too baldly or contradict observable facts too obviously for solemn editorial approval, if only they sounded sufficiently moral. Any increase in the crime rate, for example, was obviously the result of the decline of religion; any attempt to discuss other, and perhaps more pertinent or proximate factors, was considered unnecessary. The social encyclicals stressed the need for a reform of social institutions as well as of individuals. Yet over the years many Catholic papers have been satisfied with echoing the pious platitude that people worry too much about reforming society when everyone knows that all our problems would be solved if only people would be better.

Added to this love for the oversimplified solution is a strong tendency, in Catholic groups and publications, to personify ideas or movements of which they disapprove on moral grounds. Thus Margaret Sanger often becomes, not someone whose motives are known only to God although her social theories on artificial birth prevention must be condemned, but a scheming woman who deliberately set out to disrupt the family, lead young people into sin and ultimately destroy the American way of life. In the same way, many Catholics identified Stalin with Communism, and the triumph of Communism in China with Mao Tse-tung—or, more likely, with Dean Acheson and General George C. Marshall.

In the area of foreign affairs, this habit of personifying movements or forces is dangerous in the extreme, because it is easy to get the idea that all our problems would be solved if only Stalin were dead, or Malenkov, or Mao Tse-tung, or Beria, or Hirohito or someone else. This is rarely the case, since the conduct of foreign affairs is at the best of times a complicated and tortuous business, and today is doubly so. But personifying evil has the advantage of keeping the problem small and—on the surface at least—within manageable proportions.

NOWHERE does this predisposition to the simplistic show up more strikingly than on the question of Communism. For many American Catholics, Communism has long been the magic touchstone. If the Communists are for something, these Catholics are automatically against it. Despite the social teachings of the Church, and the labor of many devoted Catholics, clerical and lay, there is not much doubt that in many Catholic groups opposition to labor unions, public housing, slum clearance, efforts to win interracial justice and the like is due to this absurd use of Communism as a negative determinant of what Catholics favor. In such circles the suggestion that Catholics might be for certain things

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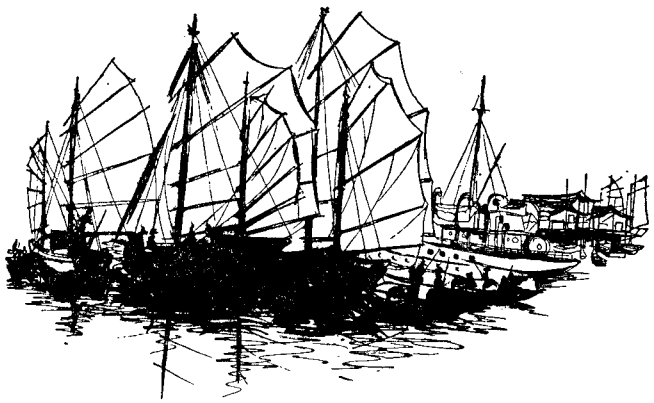
which Communists also favor will produce nothing but suspicion and ostracism.

It should also be noted that the use of Communism as a magic yardstick works both ways; anyone vociferously "anti-Communist" is sacrosanct. Senator McCarran is a good example of this; the immigration policies he pushes through seem hardly in the spirit of the papal approach to world population problems. But he is very anti-Communist and "security-minded." Thus the nation was recently surprised by a well-known Jesuit's attacking in most heated terms the Jesuit weekly *America* which had criticized Senator McCarran's immigration legislation; the Jesuit defended Senator McCarran's policies, apparently because he is anti-Communist, whatever Catholic population experts may think of his stand on immigration.

In discussing isolationism among American Catholics, the question of Communism is of key importance. Despite the many years in which the Catholic press has hammered away at Communism, it has almost always been in negative terms. Serious attempts to understand and explain Communism have been rare, and few Catholic publications have tried to give their readers an understanding of the dynamism and appeal of Communism. The many cartoonists who depicted Stalin with two locks of hair suggesting horns were only expressing a common attitude. Millions of people have given Communism their total loyalty, but Catholic isolationism sneers at any effort to understand and explain why Communism has been able to capture people's imaginations in the way it has. For American Catholic isolationists, the motives which prompted Julius and Ethel Rosenberg to go to their deaths as martyrs remain a closed book in which they are not even interested. Yet without some understanding of such conduct, the battle against Communism will be hard to win.

DISCUSSION of Communism and the simple solution brings one to Senator McCarthy. If General MacArthur is a hero to the Catholic isolationists, Senator McCarthy is their knight on a white horse. There are American Catholics who support Senator McCarthy because of a conviction that the Democratic Administration was unduly slow about moving against security risks. Members of this group do not take McCarthy lock, stock and barrel, but tend to look on him as a kind of necessary nuisance, not without fault but able to keep attention focused on eliminating subversives from sensitive government posts. In my opinion, however, the hard core of Catholic support for McCarthy comes from the essentially isolationist, nativist wing and has the same emotional roots as support for Father Coughlin in the thirties.

For the genuine isolationists among American Catholics, Joe McCarthy gives voice to all the frustrations, inadequacies and contradictions that pull them in opposite directions. Although somewhat spotty, his record on foreign policy measures is predominantly isolationist, ranging from occasional "yes" votes on something like



ECA aid for Spain to "no" votes on the Marshall Plan, Point Four, and aid to Greece and Turkey. Like the Catholic isolationists, he has no coherent, principle-centered position. Like them, he is more *anti* than *pro,* and he shares their chronic inability to distinguish between the non-conformist and the Communist, between the liberal and the totalitarian, between the reformer and the revolutionist. But he does prevent them from worrying about why Communism was able to win the loyalty of millions of Chinese; he can keep the problem small and the solutions simple, giving the impression that all our worries will be over "when the State Department is cleaned out," or Dean Acheson is gone, or George Marshall has retired, or perhaps soon, when John Foster Dulles has followed Acheson into political limbo.

In truth, Communism is capitalizing on the terrible misery in which most of the world's people live. It feeds on hunger, it grows fat on the West's record of racial exploitation of the non-white peoples, and often it enlists its most dedicated disciples from the ranks of those who tired of waiting for the conscience of Christians to attack the wrongs of the world. It cannot be stressed too often that Communism did not create these problems, which would exist to plague the world if Marx had never been born. Instead, Communism takes advantage of the existing situation; because it can do so, the terrible danger exists that the exploited people of the world will be lured from one form of serfdom into another.

THESE are facts whose consequences Catholic isolationism refuses to face. Granting their truth would involve admitting that an eventual triumph over Communism will require infinitely more than security against internal subversion and espionage. The moral reform of which the world stands in need involves, among other things, the will to work and sacrifice for the creation of

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a just social order. The war against poverty, disease and ignorance is a just war, in which the Christian must be enlisted. More than that, in these times it is a war of survival. The world will not go hungry forever, when the leavings from our table would feed them. Avoiding the positive by concentrating almost exclusively on security measures means marking time on the sidelines while the Communists steal the big show.

It is in this area, I think, that Senator McCarthy's principal danger to the nation lies. The threat he represents is two-fold. He has the traditional instinctive contempt of the demagogue for democratic processes, not in the sense that he is afraid of the people but precisely because he is confident of his ability to corrupt them. He is supremely sure that he can turn the people into a mob. Such conduct can only pollute the wellsprings of American democratic life, at a time when we can least afford it.

In addition, Senator McCarthy has consistently demonstrated a very narrow and limited approach to the subject of Communism, for all his fame as an anti-Communist. If McCarthy could be a minor attraction, keeping attention focused on the need for internal security, perhaps those who give him limited support could make a case. But this is the purest kind of dreaming. McCarthy is apparently constitutionally incapable of staying on the sidelines, and the record shows that McCarthyism is much like pregnancy—there is no such thing as a small touch of it.

In practice, whatever the theory, McCarthy-followers almost to a man seem to see the problem of Commu-

nism only in the narrow compass of their mentor and hero. Some half-hearted apologists for the Wisconsin Senator now argue that anti-McCarthyites have made too much of him and that McCarthyism is merely a sideshow. There is a certain modicum of truth in this claim: McCarthy *is* a sideshow; the problem is to keep him one, in order to preserve some sanity in our foreign policy.

FOR the typical Catholic isolationist, such criticisms of Senator McCarthy amount to *lèse-majesté*. Enthusiasm for him has become identified in their minds with both Americanism and Catholicism, and woe to the man who ventures to criticize. Here, in the manner in which they deal with those who do not share their attitudes on foreign policy, or—since the two are inextricably linked today—cannot endorse their approach to "fighting Communism," the worst side of Catholic isolationism appears.

Catholic authorities generally say that the social encyclicals have much more binding force than the average Catholic is willing to concede, and I should think the papal statements on international order would carry much the same weight. Even so, rational discussion, study of the facts and figures, and calm exchange of ideas would seem preferable to beating isolationists over the head with papal pronouncements. But there is little question of that, if only for lack of opportunity.

Catholic isolationists in positions of influence do not say they disagree with the popes on such and such a point, for such and such a reason. Instead, after saying "Aye, Aye" to papal statements, they flout them in editorials, columns and public talks. Then, to cap it all off, they frequently have the supreme gall to couch their isolationist remarks in Catholic terms, to bedeck their nativist-isolationist positions with verbiage borrowed from Catholic social thought.

Despite the fact that their general attitude on such matters is sharply at odds with the entire modern tradition of Catholic thought on international affairs, the isolationists never hesitate to use phrases like "so-called Catholics," "allegedly Catholic," "ostensibly Catholic" and the like to characterize those whose views they do not share. Once it was the Catholic who cited papal teaching on the family wage, or race, or labor unions whose orthodoxy and personal character were questioned. Today, in my opinion, efforts to apply papal thought to international affairs produce a similar reaction.

In this era, the normal American isolationist, even though sincere, represents a danger to the country. However good his motives, the Catholic isolationist in a position of power is doubly dangerous. He is a threat to the safety and welfare of the U.S. and hence to the peace of the world. At the same time he seriously compromises the Church by giving the impression—intentionally or not—that his type of purely negative anti-Communism and isolationist thinking represents the Catholic point of view. Nothing could be further from the truth.

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FROM SWEDEN

Experiment in Death

Stockholm

THE readers of this magazine may recall the Swedish surgeon, Per Wetterdal, who would ask healthy married women sent to him by the Swedish "Office for Sexual Advice" to obtain legal abortions: "Why don't you shoot one of the kids you already have? After all, it is the same thing. . . . "

Under law passed in 1946, abortions may be performed in Sweden not only in cases where pregnancy presumably menaces the life of the mother, but also on "eugenic, humanitarian and social grounds." Or as the vague and elastic expression runs, on the grounds of "weakness" or "foreseen weakness" of the mother.

The number of abortions thus performed is now rapidly approaching the forty-five thousand mark. Each case has been carefully checked ahead of time, has been performed by a well-known surgeon, and has been followed up with interviews and statistical analysis. Dr. Kinsey could not have done it more scrupulously.

The Swedish experiment is unique in the world, not only because it is performed in a country with a traditionally low birthrate, but because most of the countries in the world allow abortion only on medical grounds, if they allow it at all. The Swedish experiment is also unique from another point of view: There is no organized resistance to the use of contraceptives. No one in Sweden would dare to stand up against their use, least of all the Lutheran Church.

The result of this has been to make the Swedish people among the most contraceptive-minded, if not *the* most so-minded, people in the world. State-sponsored and private propaganda campaigns have gone on for years all over the nation, from the biggest cities to the most isolated hamlets of Lapland. Most people approve of contraceptives; practically no one objects to them.

But the increasing number of abortions performed on perfectly healthy women has brought opposition from Professor Wetterdal and a whole team of surgeons, doctors and other medical authorities. The strange thing is that none of these scientists has a religious background.

The first reaction of these medical men was a sort of instinctive revulsion against the operation itself. They were hardened to most operations, but this one, they said, was different. As one of them put it: "The people who decide on an abortion by signing their names at their writing desks don't know what it means to feel a little human being move under your fingers when you kill it. . . ." More than seventy-five per cent of all the abortions are carried out between the fourth and seventh months of pregnancy.

What these doctors wanted first of all was the right to refuse to perform the operation. That was the beginning of the controversy. The people behind the new law, most of them medical men too, and most of them with strong connections with the ruling Social Democratic party, wanted to know why their colleagues would refuse to perform an operation sanctioned by the law of Sweden. The anti-abortion doctors had to marshal arguments to support their position. To start with, they claimed the same right as that of conscientious objection. Their opponents insisted: Why should it be against your conscience? And suddenly, two groups of scientists in one of the most de-Christianized and materialistic countries in the world found themselves entangled in a violent press and radio controversy dealing with profound ethical considerations.

WHAT was then revealed about the consciences of internationally-respected scientists in this eminently civilized nation was truly bewildering. And the reaction of the public to this learned controversy about the terrible reality underlying the Fifth Commandment has been even more bewildering. Rarely has more moral confusion and inconsistency been exposed in people otherwise so qualified and personally so sincere.

As if it were not paradoxical enough that the anti-abortionist group has no religious background, but seems rather to be moved by an instinctive sense of decency, the leading figure in the abortionist group, Dr. Verner S. Westberg, head of the St. Erik Clinic in Stockholm, claims to be deeply religious. He says that he has passed through a religious crisis, caused by the abortions for which he has been responsible, but has now reached peace of soul, at the rhythm of approximately six thousand abortions a year. After the crisis, he came to the conclusion that the words of Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," weigh more than the Fifth Commandment. The neighbor in this case is the pregnant woman risking "weakness," whereas the foetus is not yet a real human being—at least not before it is fourteen inches long, according to Swedish law and the official attitude of the Lutheran Church.

Dr. Westberg, during the long talks I have had with him, seemed to be sincere, and the sudden promotion of the foetus from something which has no more value than a tumor—a moving tumor—to the status of a human being when it passes the fatal fourteen inches, does not seem to disturb him. But he admits that if you consider the foetus to be a human being before

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birth, as he does not, then the only possible and consistent attitude is that of the Catholic Church. A restless and searching person, he has on several occasions submitted the abortion cases he has had to consider to groups of experienced Lutheran clergymen. Their opinions were contradictory to such a degree that some of them were more favorable to legal abortion than the doctor himself would have been. Their complete lack of orientation seemed to give him a sort of certainty that he was right.

The Office for Sexual Advice, directed by Dr. Westberg, is the supreme tribunal for granting or refusing legal abortions (some of them on condition of sterilization). Its purpose is to combat the illegal abortion racket by taking control of practically all the abortions in the country; to give advice on contraceptive technique; and to give other marital advice. Slightly more than half of the increasing number of abortion applications are granted.

When I visited the Office, a woman whose application had been refused was suffering from violent, almost suicidal attacks of hysteria, and was being kept under constant watch in one of the rooms. The only solution seemed to be to reconsider her case as "her weakness was increasing." Another woman was granted an abortion, but changed her mind when she felt the first movements of the child in her body. Still another woman wanted an abortion for she had become pregnant by a lover, having already borne two children by her husband. The Office convinced her to bear the child, divorce the husband, and marry the lover. That, in a few words, is how the Office works at present.

The present controversy hinges partly on the question of whether illegal abortions have decreased or not. The abortionists try to prove that they have; the anti-abortionists allege that they have not. A state commission is looking into the matter, but both sides privately admit that reliable statistics are impossible to obtain. The only points which seem to be sure are that the price of legal abortions has decreased, and their methods have improved, and that above all the doctors and public have become increasingly "abortion-minded" as a result of the new law.

THE second function of the Office for Sexual Advice—the giving of advice on contraceptives—has produced some astonishing facts about the behavior of these most anti-conceptive people in the world. Among women who apply for abortions, and the fathers of the expected babies, the normal use of contraceptives is incredibly low. Among married men, only 4.6 per cent use contraceptives regularly and 16.3 per cent occasionally, whereas among the married women only .9 per cent use them regularly and 4.8 per cent occasionally. Among unmarried couples, the figures are even lower: And this after years of propaganda. The Office meets the same reluctance to use contraceptives in its attempts to "re-educate" its clients. More than a fifth of the women who have had one abortion (and were not sterilized) are pregnant again within a year, and a third are pregnant again within the space of a couple of years.

Some officials of the Office were at first convinced that this situation was the result of "unconscious remnants of religious prejudice." But it turned out that the reality was much less complicated. The average men and women were simply fed up, and agreed with the cynical French saying that contraceptives are "a cobweb against risk and an armor against pleasure."

The anti-abortionists are concerned mainly with one ethical argument—from the Codex Ethicus of the Swedish medical corps. Paragraph four reads: "The physician must remember his duty to protect and conserve human life from its very beginning in the womb of the mother." Otherwise their arguments have been almost exclusively materialistic and pragmatic. One of them, Professor Erik Ask-Upmark, does not hesitate to affirm that due partly to medical advances only five per cent of the yearly abortions in Sweden would be necessary to save the presumably menaced life of the mother.

That is the present status of the Swedish experiment. The anti-abortionists have necessarily been forced to fall back on basic positions very close to those of the Catholic Church, which have proved to be the only consistent and defendable arguments. And isolated Lutheran clergymen, concerned with the moral confusion, are reluctantly taking up the same stand as that of Rome.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

THE STAGE

THE LITTLE HUT

THE international fortunes of Miss Nancy Mitford's anglicized version of Andre Roussin's Parisian farce have been so hotly debated in the local press that whatever remains to be said is of academic interest. But an indisposition had prevented my previous attendance at "The Little Hut," and when I finally went, it was under a full cloud of magisterial critical disapproval and within sight of the lamentable prospect of a Saturday closing.

How pleasurable then (for the unexpected here is *so* unexpected) to find the work temperate and civilized, disclosing among the prankish audacities of Oliver Messel's decor a fine and delicate comic intelligence, and that Gallic *brio* which is not to be had by taking

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thought. "The Little Hut" is again in the adulterous tradition of the French theatre, sensually arid, but putting forth exuberant blossoms of paradox. In Miss Mitford, M. Roussin found his perfect collaborator: she moved it into her own crystalline, elegant world of the British aristocracy, and deepened what might have been an insular anecdote into a wicked jest on national manners. The tension of the play's cool and frivolous surface is beautifully sustained; a special quality of joyous artistry shows constantly and clearly.

That tone, however, suffers a dilution in performance. The three major players—Roland Culver, Colin Gordon and Anne Vernon are resourceful and gifted, even, by present standards, admirable, but somehow subtly off key. Too often, they walk a placid path in the meadows of whimsey and genteel eccentricity; rarely do they invade the country of the bizarre or the grotesque. All of which inevitably diminishes the pressure of the evening. Still, "The Little Hut" gives an individual pleasure. It would delight a theatre of civility and taste. (*At the Coronet.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

OF BEASTS AND MEN

WALT Disney, who has been entertaining us with his fine series of True-Life Adventure shorts about the antics of seals, beavers, alligators and other wild animals in their natural habitats, now comes out with "The Living Desert," the first feature-length film in this series. Its main theme is struggle for existence on the Great American Desert—a locale where survival at all is the wonder. Much of the film's action has to do with fighting; and some pretty tense fights there are—between a hawk and a rattlesnake, between a tarantula and a Pepsis wasp who stings her foe to provide food for her larvae, between some desert peccaries and a bobcat who gets chased up a giant cactus much to his regret. "The Living Desert" is not for the squeamish, but it has its lighter and prettier moments too: some round-tailed ground squirrels gamboling on the desert, a couple of scorpions doing a courtship dance (seemingly keeping time to the hillbilly music that accompanies their gyrations) and some fine shots caught by the time-lapse camera of cactus flowers coming into bloom. No doubt James Algar who directed the film and wrote the informative script with Winston Hibler and Ted Sears deserves much applause for "The Living Desert" but special praise should go to the many fine photographers whose patience and skill have brought us these unusual scenes. The film is intelligently edited and beautifully photographed in Technicolor.

The Disney studio is releasing "The Living Desert" as the feature item on a complete Disney program which includes two other films: "Stormy, the Thoroughbred," a long and too cutely anthropomorphic short about a colt that has an inferiority complex, and "Ben and Me," a twenty-minute animated cartoon about a churchmouse named Amos, with Sterling Holloway at his best as narrator.

HALL Bartlett has produced a film which distinguishes itself by being a football picture about a football hero in which the football player plays himself. What's more, Elroy Hirsch plays himself very well, although Mr. Bartlett, who wrote the screenplay, and Francis D. Lyon, who directed the picture, undoubtedly deserve much of the credit for his success. Hirsch is supported by Lloyd Nolan as a coach, by Joan Vohs, an attractive newcomer who may remind you of a youthful Loretta Young as she plays Mrs. Hirsch, and a lot of Los Angeles Rams who play themselves and what really is good football, even if "Crazylegs" does give us a little too much of a good thing.

COLEY Wallace plays the famous fighter in "The Joe Louis Story." Director Robert Gordon had some difficulty in keeping the picture from being too naive, but the ups and downs of the Louis story are interesting enough that you may find yourself overlooking the film's unprofessional air. The fight scenes are excellent, and the good supporting cast give young Wallace all the help they can. Hilda Simms, Paul Stewart and James Edwards win acting honors, but Coley Wallace comes through with the punch.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"SILENCE ON THE LEFT"

New York, N. Y.

TO the editors: Michael Harrington states [October 2, 1953] that "the social basis of McCarthyism is to a large extent middle class." He then goes on to discuss the role of the middle class as the "revolutionary class" in industrialized countries in the twentieth century.

Leaving to the side his thesis (which seems to me highly dubious in its application to the United States and perhaps elsewhere) may I say that I do not believe there is any *factual* support for this description of "McCarthyism" as "middle class in its social basis."

How is such a conclusion arrived at? By an analysis of the vote for Senator McCarthy in Wisconsin? Right

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after the election I made such an analysis, visiting a number of key voting areas . . . and found no class lines in Senator McCarthy's appeal. Also, during the last campaign, while interviewing voters all over the country, I talked to quite a number of people who felt that "McCarthy was getting results" or who were outraged over "the Communists in the Government." These supporters of Senator McCarthy did not fit any class category either.

I have been doing a good bit of work on the whole "Communist" issue (as it has been labeled) in present-day politics. To interpret it in terms of "class" is to miss its significance.

SAMUEL LUBELL.

REPLY

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Class analysis of American politics is admittedly difficult. One of the finest contributions to this study was Mr. Lubell's own *Future of American Politics*. Yet in this case, I feel that he misses my point.

I did not arrive at my description of middleclass support for McCarthy by "an analysis of the vote for Senator McCarthy in Wisconsin." I would base my long-range description of middle class attitudes and politics on C. Wright Mills' brilliant and documented statistical study, *White Collar*. Mills concluded that the new middle classes "hesitate, confused and vacillating in their opinions, unfocused and discontinuous in their actions. They are worried and distrustful but, like so many others, they have no targets on which to focus their worry and distrust. They may be politically irritable, but they have no political passion. They are a chorus, too afraid to grumble, too hysterical in their applause. They are rear-guarders."

Mills, in 1951, did not tie up this analysis with McCarthyism. I do. The factual basis is this: articulate support for McCarthy does not come from working class organizations, nor from the organs of Eastern finance capital (the "internationalist wing" of the Republican Party), nor generally from farm organizations. It comes from groups like the American Legion, the anti-UN associations, small businessmen. There are McCarthyites in every strata of American life, but the most organized and vocal support has, in fact, come from middle class oriented groups.

A crucial question, it seems to me, is how a middle class which is like the industrial worker in economic position, and unlike him in notions of status, will react: by changing status notions and organizing for economic security or by holding to their status notions and becoming reactionary and anti-labor in opposition to economic self-interest. That the German middle class, for instance, found itself in roughly the same position is substantiated by books like Carl Dreyfuss' *Occupation and Ideology*

For the Young —

THE FIRST CATHOLICS

The Story of the Acts of the Apostles for Children

by Marigold Hunt

This re-telling of **Acts** provides just enough in the way of background and explanation to make children feel at home with St. Luke, and to enable them really to enjoy the adventures of the Apostles. Children from ten up can read it for themselves, younger ones will like it read to them. The author says she would have liked this book very much when she was young: we suspect she is rather fond of it even now. The Apostle on the left is from one of the illustrations: there are endpaper maps, too. **$2.75**

For the Wise:

The THEOLOGY of the SPIRITUAL LIFE

by Joseph de Guibert, S. J.

The translation of Father Joseph de Guibert's **Theologia Spiritualis Ascetica et Mystica** into English is intended to supply the need for a work on the spiritual life which is at once theological, scientific and practical. The author, who died in 1942, was Professor of Ascetical and Mystical Theology at the Gregorian University in Rome, and as such was one of the world's foremost authorities in his field. **$4.50**

Order from a bookstore

In addition to the usual reviews and extracts from new books, the Christmas **TRUMPET** contains a Children's Supplement, made up almost entirely of pages from books. We think they will find it amusing, and that it will be a real help in choosing books for Christmas. To get both **TRUMPET** and supplement, write to **Lucy MacGill.**

SHEED & WARD **New York 3**

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of the Salaried Worker. The German middle class made the revolutionary choice of Nazism. In the United States, the process has obviously not gone anywhere near as far. But I consider the McCarthyism of the middle class oriented groups to be a trend in that direction. Mr. Lubell and I agree that the question is complex (too complex, perhaps, for an article in The Commonweal to cover), but I feel that my tentatives still stand.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON.

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Many thanks from all the staff for writing of the grave financial situation here at Friendship House [October 9, 1953].

Your account of the threatened eviction of Friendship House from Harlem brought a terrific response—over four thousand dollars. Because of the generosity of some four hundred of your readers, we were able to pay all our bills. We've gotten the mortgage payments on Blessed Martin Farm up to date.

Our library and office, which had been housed for fifteen years at 34 West 135th Street, has been moved several blocks away to 452 Lenox Avenue. Our Clothing Center and Clubroom can remain for a time on the other side of 135th Street.

Construction crews descended on our old quarters as soon as we'd gotten out. Our new place on Lenox is in a dilapidated store front and is on the same slum clearance site. This block too will eventually be torn down, so we look forward to sharing a nomadic and uncertain existence with our neighbors for some time to come.

We can't tell you our joy at hearing from so many people from every corner of the country who were anxious to help us survive. We want them to know that the bills are all paid and we will be able to continue our work in Harlem for interracial justice and the peace of Christ.

PEGGY BEVINS.

BOOKS

Figures from Two Tortured Generations

JACQUES RIVIERE. By Martin Turnell. Yale. $2.50.

SARTRE, ROMANTIC RATIONALIST. By Iris Murdoch. Yale. $2.50.

By WALLACE FOWLIE

THESE two new essays will add considerable prestige to the Yale "Studies in Modern Literature and Thought," which now include some ten or twelve titles. Both Mr. Turnell's book on Rivière and Miss Murdoch's on Sartre are far more than mere introductions to the life and work of the writer. They are examples of provocative critical comment which relate each to the problems of his generation—the philosophies and aesthetics of the twenties in the case of Rivière; the perplexities of the fifties in the case of Sartre.

Mr. Martin Turnell is a member of the staff of the British Broadcasting Corporation in London and is well known in this country for his critical writings on French literature, and notably for his book *The Novel in France*. His study of Jacques Rivière is the first to appear in English on the man who was editor of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* between 1919 and 1925. Rivière was thirty-eight years old at the time of his death in 1925. Mr. Turnell does not attempt to prove that he was a great writer, but he is fully justified in claiming for him a place of importance in contemporary French letters.

Rivière became, and remains, an interpreter of his generation. His own life, characterized by scrupulous self-analysis and self-examination, was dominated by two tremendous and contradictory influences—Gide and Claudel. He was torn between the need to believe in self-renunciation, as the example of Claudel's Violaine in *L'Annonce faite à Marie* would teach him, and the passion for enriching his sensibility, as the example of Gide's Ménalque (of *Les Nourritures Terrestres*) might inculcate in him. Between the years 1907 and 1913 the influence of Claudel was uppermost, and, guided by this influence, Rivière wrote fragments of what might have developed into a significant modern apologetics for Catholicism. During the years after the war the influence of Gide, as well as that of Proust and Freud, affected his earlier, more penitential, character.

The opening chapters of Mr. Turnell's study analyze Rivière's friendship with Alain-Fournier (whose sister he married in 1909), their temperamental differences and the value of their published correspondence. Rivière's theology, as found in his letters to Claudel and in his volume *A la trace de Dieu*, is treated by Mr. Turnell as the theology of a literary critic. The degree of unsoundness he finds there helps to explain Rivière's intermittent attachment to the Catholic Church. There is not much doubt that he was on the side of the Modernists, and his influence has been felt largely among those young writers who have encouraged the cult of *inquiétude*—writers for whom Claudel would feel little sympathy.

As a literary critic, Rivière practiced a method which both Mr. Turnell and Mr. Eliot believe an admirable discipline, characterized by suppleness, nuance, and an absence of dogmatism. The traditional French critic—Taine, for example—works in agreement with a "system." Rivière's criticism, which resembles Baudelaire's in this respect, is distrustful of any formulated critical systems. Rivière was far from being impressionist as critic, but he was highly personal. His long study

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of Claudel, for instance, which appeared in the volume *Etudes,* was an attempt, according to Turnell, to solve his own religious dilemmas.

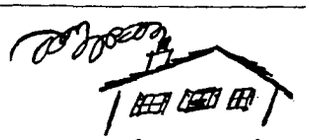
Rivière's book on Rimbaud is his longest and most developed critical study. Despite certain exaggerations in it, I would consider it his most valuable. Mr. Turnell would probably not agree with me. The critical piece to which he pays greatest attention is *Le Roman d'Aventure,* which is in large part an analysis of symbolism. In this piece, published in May, June, July 1913, Rivière made certain prophecies concerning the future of the novel. They were substantiated in *A la recherche du temps perdu,* the first part of which appeared in November 1913, and in *Ulysses,* which Joyce began writing in 1914. Rivière was a man of his times and a prophet of things to come.

MISS Murdoch, a tutor in philosophy at Oxford, offers us a study of existentialist philosophy based largely on Sartre's novels and, to a lesser extent, on his philosophical work, *L'Etre et le Néant.* At every point in her close analysis the thought of Sartre is related to its contemporary context in philosophy, aesthetics and psychology. In attempting to understand and explain Sartre, she attempts to understand man's fate in modern history.

The exegesis of *La Nausée* which she makes in her opening chapter is an excellent example of Miss Murdoch's method. From a consideration of the creative work itself, and its relationship to the creative works of Virginia Woolf, Joyce and Proust, she reaches an understanding of what *La Nausée* really is. ("It seems more like a poem or an incantation than a novel."). The argument of the first three volumes of *Les Chemins de la Liberté* provides her with further notes on the individual consciousness, on the solipsistic center of the individual, on the essential difference between Sartre and Gabriel Marcel. The study of Sartre becomes for her a means of re-examining symbolist poetry and surrealism, of contrasting the Marxist thinker with the Existentialist.

The full title of her book is *Sartre, Romantic Rationalist.* In chapter seven, Miss Murdoch explains "Romantic Rationalist." Sartre does not believe in God or nature or history, but he does believe in reason. Yet his reason is not practical; it is philosophical. His evil is not sin or social conditions; it is the total unintelligibility of our human condition. Sartre takes refuge in a "deliberately unpractical ideal of rationality."

The concept of freedom is central in Sartre, and Miss Murdoch analyzes it as it appears in his novels, his philosophical treatises and his critical tract, *What Is Literature?* One wishes that space had allowed her to make a study of his plays, especially *The Flies,* in which considerable elucidation is given to the idea of Sartrian freedom. All things considered, however, this book seems to me one of the most objective and useful yet written on Sartre and his significance for our time.



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Desperate Hope

THE HIVE. By Camilo Jose Cela. Translated by J. M. Cohen. Farrar, Straus and Young. $3.50.

By ROBERT H. BOYLE

THE publication of *The Hive* introduces to American readers Camilo José Cela, generally regarded by Spanish critics as the finest novelist writing in their country today. And while some Americans may unthinkingly attribute Cela's high place in Spanish letters to the absence of competition, one reading of *The Hive* should convince them otherwise—he is one of the most gifted and powerful writers in contemporary Europe.

Cela came into prominence in 1942 with the appearance of his first novel, *La familia de Pascual Duarte*. He was then twenty-six years old. *Pascual Duarte*—the "autobiography" of an Estremenian peasant who butchers a dog, a horse, his wife's lover, and finally his own mother—instantly was hailed as a work of major importance. It was, in brief, both a *succès de scandale* and a *tour de force*.

Cela repeated but refined his naturalistic technique in his next novel, *Pabellón de reposo,* a work —in letter form—about the sufferings of consumptives. Like *Pascual Duarte,* it shocked both the critics and the public. A recent issue of *Books Abroad* reports *Pabellón* was so realistically convincing Cela received a letter from a doctor imploring him to halt serialization on the grounds the novel had impeded the progress of his tubercular patients. (Incidentally, one may note Cela's admiration for Dostoevsky, an admiration which apparently manifested itself in his Spanish version of *Poor Folk.*)

Cela's next work, *Nuevas aventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes,* gave everyone a bit of respite. The publication of this picaresque novel encouraged the hope Cela had abandoned his role as a chronicler of human degradation.

But then *The Hive* appeared to end any such hope. And for reasons understandable to most Spaniards, publication took place in Buenos Aires rather than Madrid or Barcelona.

The Hive is not, properly speaking, a novel. It has no beginning, middle, or end—it does not *resolve* a moral problem. It is, in Cela's words, a "slice of life," and his artistic conscience could not allow him to write otherwise.

It is a collection of sketches, or snapshots, of the patrons of a café located in a shabby section of Madrid. But then one may say that if these sketches are snapshots, Cela employs a wide-angle lens since the reader is also presented with glimpses of the patrons' acquaintances and families. The sketches are interconnected, and while the reader gains additional insight into the more than one hundred and fifty characters by this method, it is certainly an indication of Cela's poetic vigor that almost all the sketches can stand alone without the support of one another.

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which possess the despair and bitterness which Cela displays in *The Hive*. One almost believes Cela is not an author, but a grotesque version of a butterfly collector. The book often portrays the characters involved much as a neatly mounted collection under glass displays the various types of butterfly. Here are Cela's characters, pinned and isolated, exposed in all shades and varieties to the reader's eye. They may beat their wings or wiggle on the hook, but they are unable to escape either from Cela or from life.

Consider Dona Rosa, the proprietress of the café, whose

> . . . face is covered with blotches; it always looks as if she were changing her skin like a lizard. When she is deep in thought, she forgets herself and picks strips off her face, sometimes as long as paper streamers. . . .

There is the gypsy street singer with "the face of a perverted farmyard beast." He sings until two in the morning when he tries to catch a ride home on the bumper of the last tram. He is "about six."

No doubt *The Hive* will be both condemned and deplored for its recital of the ugly. Gerald Brenan said the note of hunger runs through the Spanish novel, and *The Hive* is no exception. Everyone in it is wracked by either a physical or spiritual hunger, and one is led to conclude that Cela—a veteran of the Civil War and a member of the Falange—has written it in expiation for the loss of human dignity which he depicts. But even in its most brutal moments, and there are many, *The Hive* is desperately optimistic.

Perhaps that desperation is best expressed by Cela when he writes

> . . . the heart of the café has an uneven beat, like a sick man's, and the air seems to get thicker and greyer, though now and then a cooler breath pierces it like a flash; no one knows where it comes from, but it is a breath of hope that opens, for a few seconds, a little window in each shuttered spirit.

Postwar Tactics

EUROPEAN COMMUNISM. By Franz Borkenau. Harper. $6.

By N. S. TIMASHEFF

FRANZ Borkenau, who was himself a member of the German Communist Party until 1929, wrote *World Communism* in 1938. His new book is a sequel which begins with three chapters condensing the earlier study. These chapters are followed by an interesting section on French Communism up to 1934. Here Mr. Borkenau provides an excellent discussion of the impact French regionalism, and the differences between various sections of that country, have had on the French labor movement. What he has to say is very helpful toward reaching an understanding of contemporary France's inability to settle on a firm and stable policy. Mr. Borkenau's first book concentrated on Germany. In this sequel emphasis has been shifted to France—where decisive struggles between freedom and Communism have been, and probably will continue to be, fought out.

The bulk of Borkenau's study is devoted to events which took place in Europe between 1934 and 1945. The history of the Communist movement during those years is presented in great detail—perhaps in too great detail, for sometimes the reader is barely able to follow the author's leading train of thought. Where the history of European monarchies was concerned, in addition to the narratives in the grand manner there was also a "petty history" written, which dealt with court intrigues, love affairs, scandals, etc. These "petty histories" were never edifying, but sometimes were highly amusing. But where Communist machinations are concerned, I am afraid that the "petty history" not only fails to edify but is far too grim to offer amusement.

If one is able to overcome the hurdles created by Mr. Borkenau's overemphasis on details, his book will yield much valuable knowledge and many questionable but unfailingly stimulating interpretations of Communist history. Take, for instance, his analysis of Stalin's re-

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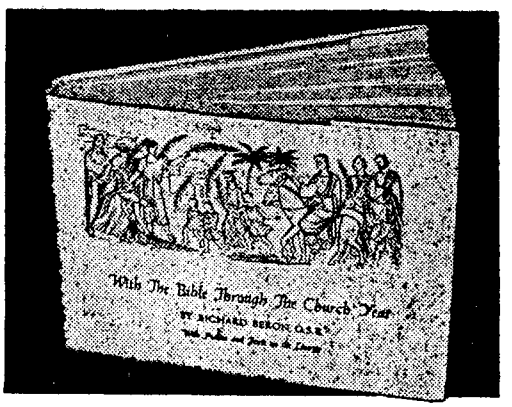

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action to the rise of Hitler. It is well known that Stalin did not find Hitler's ascendancy a crushing development. But why? Mr. Borkenau convincingly argues that Stalin's attude can be traced to the fact that he actually believed that the socialists were "social fascists" (as the propaganda slogans had it), therefore fascism had already won, so things could not get worse.

The author's treatment of Stalin's policies relative to the Spanish civil war is also enlightening. As is well known, Stalin never cared to give the Spanish Communists too much aid. For him the war in Spain actually meant a tragic dilemma: he could not intervene in favor of the Party in Spain because that would provoke a four-power pact against the Soviet; on the other hand, he had to intervene because his abstention would bring on the collapse of the Popular Front, in which he believed.

Recounting the history of the Popular Front period, Mr. Borkenau throws light on the case of Dimitrov, who was head of the Comintern in the last phase of its existence. Dimitrov, he says, was an extraordinarily narrow-minded party bureaucrat. There was nothing heroic about his vaunted "heroism" during the Reichstag trial because Stalin had secured his release in advance, and Dimitrov knew it. Later, when he had to preside over important meetings, Dimitrov threw imploring glances toward Manuilsky every time he had to take the stand on some question; it was Manuilsky who had been officially dismissed in order to make room for Dimitrov, the new "hero."

Probably Mr. Borkenau's greatest single contribution in this study of Communism is found in his chapter on the role of the Communists in the French Resistance movement. "It is by a hair's breadth that France escaped the fate of becoming a 'Popular Democracy'," he says. To a great extent the defeat of the Communist plans for France was due to the perspicacity and obstinacy of General de Gaulle.

Tito's story is told again, and well, but Mr. Borkenau adds practically nothing to what is already known about the Yugoslav leader. *European Communism* ends with the year 1945, so there are only two short chapters to deal with the rise of the Popular Democracies and the formation of the Cominform.

Not all Mr. Borkenau's generalizations and suggestions are acceptable. For instance, one of his working hypotheses is the existence of a rigid parallelism between the Kremlin's policies at home and those abroad. There is, of course, a correlation, but one should not put too much stress on it. Mr. Borkenau, however, does just that; he asserts, for example, that there was a "liberal spell" in the Kremlin's home policies prior to the great purges of 1936-38. This reviewer is unaware of any such "liberal spell."

Borkenau tends to explain the success of Communism in many Western countries by attributing it to the inability of other parties of the Left to find a common language and common program. There is much truth in that proposition, but, I think, the author doesn't seem to

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realize another and more basic blunder made by the leftists: that is, they are so afraid the rightists might get control that they habitually underestimate the danger from the extreme Left (if that term is still applicable to Communism). The mistake was made first by the Kerensky government in Russia and has been repeated often since.

In my opinion, Mr. Borkenau rejoices too much over the failures of the Communists, of which there are, of course, many. But, after all, Communism has succeeded in winning one third of the world's population. Under the circumstances, to place undue emphasis on the Kremlin's failure to achieve, here and there, some tactical goal diverts attention from the fact that the general trend of recent history has favored the Communists rather than their adversaries.

These criticisms aside, it must be said that *European Communism* is a valuable study, and another volume by Franz Borkenau on European Communism since 1945 would be highly welcome.

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Implied Emotion

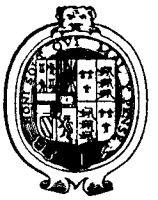
THE PRESENT AND THE PAST. by Ivy Compton-Burnett. Messner. $3.50.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

CATHERINE Clare, mother of two boys, has been separated from them and their father for nine years. "It was supposed to be the best," the older son says of this arrangement. "I wonder what the worst could have been." Cassius Clare, Catherine's former husband, now husband to Flavia and also father to her three children, is a Compton-Burnett tyrant type, of whom the children speak with puzzlement and bitter understanding. "Is Father happy?" says one child. "He is often satisfied," says another. "You can see him having the satisfaction." Father, by permitting his first wife to return to be near her sons, causes no end of pain and conversation. The story ends grandly and tragically, with only Father's voice forever silenced.

It is a sign of this novel's excellence that, although consisting like Miss Compton-Burnett's other novels almost entirely of dialogue, it hardly looks as if it wanted to be made into a play. These conversations, with their not very nice distinctions and numerous pronouns, belong on printed pages where the eye can look back to antecedents now and then. But that is a minor reason. The things conveyed in this book are too inextricably fused with the medium for any easy translation to the stage. Miss Compton-Burnett, getting many of her effects by implications in the dialogue, seldom needs to tell us when Flavia is blanching or Cassius scowling, for much of the reader's delight comes from catching-on-without-being-told. This is the art that reveals art. Many people do not like that kind, although to appreciate technique is a form of human enjoyment at least as high as only getting lost in the substance.

But the substance here is formidable. It is human emotion, and people's ways of hiding and expressing it, and in a few passages Miss Compton-Burnett has deepened



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emotion almost to the point of straining her special, straitened methods. The preceding three novels of hers published in this country seemed predominantly compounded of bitter extracts; the outrageous, aphoristic discussions suited, and were suited to, such realities beautifully. In this novel we have the same sharply divided castes of characters: parents, children and servants, pouncing on each other's verbal imprecisions and human perplexity like reporters at a presidential press conference. But we have in addition one or two scenes in which statements right out of the soul really supersede their syntax; goodness rears its unwieldy head and threatens to burst the spare fictional conventions in which it was born.

For readers with a taste for this novelist's kind of salt, it is a story wonderful and memorable. Not the least amazing are two supernumerary characters, Catherine's brother and sister, who talk to each other mostly about their detachment from "life" and the significance of their sister's arrival. Ursula says, "I am getting quite excited." "Not as excited as I am," says her brother Elton. "I must rise and pace the room." Ursula replies, "And I will keep my seat by an effort." Much later in the story, after many analyses of selflessness and a few instances of it, Ursula, speaking from the sidelines, is able to say, "We have seen the nobler side of human nature. And it is so much nobler; I had no idea of it. I am greatly softened. I hope it is wholesome discomfort."

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By M. A. FITZSIMONS

IN THIS volume Dr. Shuster has merged his Gabriel Richard lectures to present the practical experience gained "in dealing as concretely as possible with some aspects of the problem of international cultural understanding." He approaches the subject from the position frequently reiterated by the recent popes, that man's social and political activity takes place in reference to two poles: the nation, and the fact of international solidarity, arising from the truth that we are all creatures of God and bound to mutual love and justice.

The principles are simple, but their application is full of complexity. It is on this ground that the author is most illuminating. His reverence for the human person and the intellect makes him critically alert to expose the banality of slogans such as "scientific humanism," and the gadgeteering and empty-headed good will which readily intrude into the sphere of cultural cooperation. But he is, also, justly severe with those segments of the Catholic population who extend their utter negativism in foreign policy to opposition to such organizations as UNESCO.

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UNESCO's preamble states that a lasting peace must be founded "upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind." The statement is a truth, even though some members of UNESCO may have entertained facile or naive hopes when they subscribed to it. The Catholic position should involve an acceptance of the statement, and, recognizing the difficulties of the aim, a vigorous effort to promote it. Meanwhile, as Dr. Shuster indicates, it is necessary to foster the preliminary and intermediate measures which may contribute to the larger aim.

Meditation

THE WORD. A Meditation on the Prologue to St. John's Gospel. By Adrienne von Speyr. Translated by Alexander Dru. McKay. $2.50.

By ALBAN BAER

CARDINAL Innitzer describes Adrienne von Speyr as a "lay theologian on whom rests the blessing of God." Mr. T. S. Eliot says her book gives "a new experience of Christian sensibility." Mr. Alexander Dru, the well-known student of Kierkegaard, characterizes it as "the work of a creative writer whose profound and original thought is so directly and powerfully expressed that it is open to everyone at different levels of understanding." Perhaps it would be presumptuous for a humble reviewer to endorse these opinions. But the very eminence of these critics and their fulsome praise necessitates for the reader a word of reassurance. There is nothing *recherché* or erudite about these meditations. They cover the traditional ground of Catholic faith. They had better be read slowly, but they require no elaborate background of reading or knowledge.

Frau von Speyr has written a commentary on the whole of Saint John's gospel. This is a translation of the section on the prologue (chapter 1—1:18). She takes each of its phrases as a starting point for a meditation and by the end of the prologue has covered all the great mysteries of the Christian economy. At the center of it all is the Word—and John, the beloved disciple, who leads us to it. It is beside the point to say that all her meanings cannot be read into the Scripture text. Her method is rather one of association and suggestion.

This book is no substitute for a critical commentary or dogmatic textbook. It is too discursive, too personal for that. If it quickens in the reader a desire to "read, learn and inwardly digest" the prologue for himself, if it points a way for him to improve his own meditations, it will have served its purpose.

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N. S. Timasheff is a member of the Russian Institute of Fordham University.

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